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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Report of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities on its thirty-fourth session*

(New York, 13-14 May 2014)

I. Introduction

1. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities (UN-Space) held its thirty-fourth session at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 13 and 14 May 2014, under the chairmanship of Simonetta Di Pippo, Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat.

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 68/75, welcomed the increased efforts to strengthen further the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities and recommended that the abbreviation "UN-Space" be used to refer to the Inter-Agency Meeting to increase its visibility. UN-Space is the central United Nations coordination mechanism for space-related activities, under the leadership of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, with the aim of promoting synergies and preventing duplication of efforts related to the use of space technology and applications in the work of United Nations entities.

3. The Chair, in her introductory remarks, recalled that UN-Space provided an opportunity to discuss the views of United Nations entities on the role of space-related activities in the wider context of the global development agenda and that collaboration would result in greater use of space technology as an enabler and a means of implementation of the development objectives in the work of the United Nations and Member States, in particular under the post-2015 development agenda.

4. In accordance with the agreement reached at the thirty-third session, in 2013, the thirty-fourth session of the Meeting was held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG). In order to increase awareness of the work of those two United Nations coordination

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mechanisms, a joint meeting was held on 14 May. The open informal session was held on 14 May in order to reach out to representatives of States Members of the United Nations with respect to the theme of the contribution of space technology and applications to the post-2015 development agenda.

5. In the course of the work of UN-Space at its thirty-fourth session, and in the light of the low participation of United Nations entities in the session, the agenda for the session was dealt with in a more flexible manner, enhancing discussions on the way forward in enhancing the role of UN-Space as a central coordination mechanism in the United Nations system, including ways and means of increasing synergy and coordination among the mechanisms of UN-Space, UNGIWG and the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management.

6. Consequently, agenda item 4 on climate change, item 5 on disaster risk reduction and emergency response, and item 6 on the use of spatial data were not dealt with in substance at the thirty-fourth session. (For more information on activities of United Nations entities in those areas, see document A/AC.105/1063.) The participants in the session agreed that the overall discussion on strategies for the future role of UN-Space was important and that the agreement reached at the session could give rise to several positive ways to enhance the overall coordination of space-related activities in the United Nations system.

7. The list of participants at the thirty-fourth session is contained in annex I to the present report, the agenda adopted by the Meeting is contained in annex II, and the agenda for the open informal session held on 14 May 2014 is contained in annex III.

8. The joint meeting of UN-Space and UNGIWG held on 14 May was attended by representatives of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Field Support, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of Information and Communications Technology and the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Children's Fund (also representing the Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT) of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research), the World Food Programme, the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Office for West Africa, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Bank.

II. Coordination of plans and programmes and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas

1. Current and future plans of common interest, including consideration of how the activities of organizations of the United Nations system in the area of space science and technology and its applications relate to their mandated programmes

9. As an introduction to the review of activities related to the item, the Office for Outer Space Affairs, as the secretariat of UN-Space, provided information about the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies, bringing to the Meeting's attention matters relating to inter-agency

coordination, in particular the sharing of information on the work on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, near-Earth objects, and space and sustainable development, including the cross-cutting work of the Committee and the Working Group of the Whole of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the contribution of space technology to socioeconomic development in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the post-2015 development agenda.

10. Representatives of participating United Nations entities noted that the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2014-2015 — addressing the post-2015 development agenda (A/AC.105/1063) constituted a valid basis for reviewing efforts in that regard as it provided an overview of current efforts by the contributing United Nations entities, including those efforts aimed at achieving environmental sustainability, inclusive social and economic development and promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

11. The Meeting heard presentations by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Office for Outer Space Affairs, in its capacity as executive secretariat of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, on current activities. A statement was also made by the United Nations Children's Fund on behalf of UNITAR/UNOSAT, describing the current activities of UNOSAT.

2. Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2014-2015

12. The Meeting noted that the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2014-2015 — addressing the post-2015 development agenda (A/AC.105/1063) had been prepared in the intersessional period, for submission to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its fifty-seventh session, in 2014.

13. The Meeting recalled that the previous report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2012-2013 — the use of space-derived geospatial data for sustainable development (A/AC.105/1014) contained a recommendation, in its paragraph 86, that as a means of strengthening inter-agency coordination and cooperation, the use of space-derived geospatial data within the United Nations system should be studied further and that such use could be increased by addressing gaps and bottlenecks by, inter alia, promoting understanding of and meeting the requirements of United Nations entities in terms of data discovery, data access and technical capabilities for information processing, and developing the overall capabilities of United Nations entities relying on space-derived geospatial data in support of their operations.

14. In that regard, the Meeting noted that the report of the Secretary-General for the period 2014-2015 (A/AC.105/1063) addressed the post-2015 development agenda, focusing on areas such as environmental sustainability, inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, general coordination efforts on

space activities in promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, and building resilience through the streamlined use of space-derived information within the United Nations system.

15. The Meeting noted that the report of the Secretary-General, in its final section, addressed the way forward in harnessing space technology for the attainment of objectives of the post-2015 development agenda (see A/AC.105/1063, para. 78), and that the following could be considered by Member States and United Nations entities as goals to be pursued at the national, regional and international levels:

(a) Enhancing awareness of the potential contribution of space-derived data and information for development;

(b) Developing capacities in terms of discovery of, access to and processing and use of space-derived data and information;

(c) Strengthening institutional frameworks to facilitate the use of remote sensing data and information;

(d) Supporting standardization and updating of geospatial information, with a view to eliminating duplication and overlap, and enabling its use for multisectoral use in a harmonized manner;

(e) Promoting international cooperation for increased use of space-derived data and information for planning and decision-making processes.

16. In view of the considerations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space under its agenda item on space and sustainable development, and the considerations of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the role of space technology for socioeconomic development in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the post-2015 development agenda, the Meeting considered it was important to address those global processes through the reports of the Secretary-General prepared by the Meeting, in order to assist the Committee and the Subcommittee at their future sessions. The Meeting therefore commended the two reports of the Secretary-General, for the period 2012-2013 (A/AC.105/1014) and the period 2014-2015 (A/AC.105/1063), as providing valuable inputs to the considerations under those agenda items of the Committee and the Subcommittee.

3. Preparation of a special report on initiatives and applications for space-related inter-agency cooperation — addressing global health

17. The Meeting recalled that its previous special reports had addressed the following themes: new and emerging technologies, applications and initiatives for space-related inter-agency cooperation (A/AC.105/843); space benefits for Africa: contribution of the United Nations system (A/AC.105/941); use of space technology within the United Nations system to address climate change issues (A/AC.105/991); and space for agriculture development and food security (A/AC.105/1042).

18. The Meeting agreed that the next special report should address the theme of space for global health, and be prepared in the intersessional period, for submission to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its fifty-eighth session, in 2015.

4. Means of strengthening further inter-agency coordination and cooperation in space-related activities

19. The Meeting noted that the Office for Outer Space Affairs was currently revitalizing its website and that plans were being made to enhance the dedicated web page related to UN-Space. In the coming intersessional period, when the new website of the Office would take shape, the current UN-Space web page should be reviewed. The focal points of UN-Space should thereafter continue to provide the Office for Outer Space Affairs, on a regular basis, with updated information on their space-related programmes and activities.

20. At the same time, the Meeting requested the secretariat to look into ways and means of making the web page more transparent and up-to-date by making it possible for participating United Nations entities to upload to the web page information on upcoming conferences, meetings and events and share other valuable information, including relevant website addresses, at short notice. The creation of an online directory of portals and other sources of space-based information should be studied, with a view to increasing awareness of and access to available data and information.

21. The Meeting recommended that the future reports of the Secretary-General to be prepared by the Meeting and the special reports on specific topics should be presented to the respective intergovernmental bodies governing the work of participating United Nations entities, as appropriate.

22. The Meeting noted the importance of further reporting on activities undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the World Meteorological Organization and the International Council for Science through the Inter-Agency Coordination and Planning Committee for GEO/GEOSS. In that regard, the Meeting also noted that the secretariat of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management had observer status with the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific had been recognized as a participating organization of GEO in 2014.

23. The Meeting considered it important for the mutual benefits of overall coordination of space-related activities in the United Nations system that UN-Space, UNGIWG and the secretariat of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management made efforts to coordinate meetings and activities and more closely share information, as appropriate, while observing their respective roles and mandates. Such joint efforts would enhance overall coordination and synergy in space-related activities of United Nations entities.

III. Other matters

1. Open informal session

24. On 14 May 2014, a half-day open informal session with the participation of Member States, United Nations entities and other stakeholders was organized on the theme "Engaging space tools for development on Earth — contribution of space

technology and applications to the post-2015 development agenda". The open informal session was aimed at promoting dialogue among participants by providing examples of how the United Nations system and other actors responded to that overall theme in various areas with respect to the global development agenda. The programme of the open informal session is contained in annex III of the present report.

25. The open informal session focused on examples of how the wide range of space technology applications, involving Earth observation, global navigation satellite systems, telecommunication and telemedicine, as well as geospatial information and resilience, were being used as an enabler and means of implementation of sustainable development objectives and in furthering the post-2015 development agenda process.

26. The theme of the open informal session reflected a mounting recognition of the important role of space technology applications and use of space-derived data and information in making informed decisions at all levels. In the concluding discussion of the open informal session there was wide recognition of the need to enhance dialogue between the scientific community and the user community in order to bridge an existing gap in knowledge on the access to and use of space-based technology. Awareness-raising, capacity-building and training were of paramount importance to meet the demands of user communities, and the enabling effect of space-based applications on informed decision-making at national, regional and international levels was emphasized.

27. Considering the ongoing work of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, and the work on the post-2015 development agenda, participants noted the timeliness of the open informal session and also noted that the theme was in line with the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

2. Future programme of work

28. The Meeting agreed that more flexibility in setting the agenda was needed in order to address situations of non-participation of the relevant United Nations entities in the consideration of related items on the agenda. The Meeting was also of the view that a more flexible agenda could allow for the consideration of ad hoc items that might arise in the intersessional period between the annual sessions. Such ad hoc items could either remain on the agenda or be replaced by other items addressing matters of particular interest to the coordination of space-related activities in the United Nations system.

29. The Meeting agreed that in view of the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189), which was welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/50, an ad hoc item should be included in the agenda of UN-Space at its thirty-fifth session, in order to promote dialogue and the sharing of information relevant to the report.

30. The Meeting agreed on the following provisional agenda for its thirty-fifth session:

Regular items on coordination of space-related activities

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Coordination of future plans and programmes of common interest for cooperation and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas.
4. Use of spatial data and activities related to the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group and the United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure.
5. Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system.
6. Special report on initiatives and applications for space-related inter-agency cooperation.
7 Means of strengthening the role of UN-Space.

Thematic items to be considered, as appropriate (and on the basis of attendance)

8. Contribution of space-based technology for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
9. Use of space-based technology for disaster risk reduction and emergency response.
10. Exchange of views on the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, pertaining to coordination of activities of United Nations entities.

Other matters

11. Open informal session.
12. Future programme of work.

31. The Meeting expressed its gratitude to the Department of Safety and Security of the Secretariat, in its capacity as co-chair of UNGIWG, for the excellent arrangements made for the thirty-fourth session and the open informal session held on 14 May.

32. The Meeting agreed that in order to promote better coordination among United Nations entities, the thirty-fifth session, in 2015, could also be held in conjunction with a meeting of UNGIWG, in view of the synergies between the two inter-agency coordination mechanisms. In addition, holding the next session in conjunction with a meeting of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management should be considered. The possibility of holding, during the intersessional period in 2015, a joint session of those three coordination mechanisms should be studied.

33. The Meeting agreed that an open informal session should be held at its next session, with the theme to be determined. The host of the thirty-fifth session should be identified by the secretariat in the intersessional period.

34. The Meeting noted with appreciation the proposal of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to host the thirty-fifth session in 2015. In that regard, the Meeting requested the Commission and the secretariat to study the feasibility of organizing a session in 2015 or the near future, in conjunction with a conference of States members of the Commission.

35. The Meeting recommended that if it was not possible to hold its thirty-fifth session, in 2015, before the holding of the fifty-eighth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the report of the Meeting on its thirty-fifth session should be made available to the Committee at its session in 2016. Nevertheless, the special report would be prepared and issued for the Committee's session in June 2015.

36. The Meeting agreed that in addition to its annual session, other events and dedicated workshops or conferences could be held, at which the secretariat of UN-Space or one of the member organizations could represent UN-Space in order to increase its visibility. In order to use the UN-Space mechanism more widely, online meetings and videoconference tools, such as WebEx, could be used, as well as the organization, from time to time, of ad hoc meetings of UN-Space dedicated to specific matters on its agenda, as appropriate.

Annex I

List of participants at the thirty-fourth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities

Chair:	S. Di Pippo (Office for Outer Space Affairs)
Secretary:	N. Hedman (Office for Outer Space Affairs)

United Nations Secretariat

Department of Economic and Social Affairs	G. Scott
Department of Field Support	K-S. Eom
	G. Criloux
	T. Obukhov
	G. Velandria
	A. Kagawa
Department of Safety and Security	A. Dehondt
	H. S. Lee
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	K. Wang (via teleconference)
Economic Commission for Africa	R. Gray
Office for Outer Space Affairs	L. Czaran
	S. Gadimova
United Nations Office for West Africa / Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission	D. Baril

Other United Nations entities

United Nations Children's Fund	J. Abdalla
United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research	(represented by the United Nations Children's Fund)

Annex II

Agenda for the thirty-fourth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Coordination of future plans and programmes of common interest for cooperation and exchange of views on current activities in the practical application of space technology and related areas.
4. Contribution of space-based technology for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
5. Use of space-based technology for disaster risk reduction and emergency response.
6. Use of spatial data and activities related to the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group and the United Nations Spatial Data Infrastructure.
7. Report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system: directions and anticipated results for the period 2014-2015.
8. Preparation of a special report on initiatives and applications for space-related inter-agency cooperation.
9. Means of strengthening the role of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities.
10. Other matters.

Annex III

Agenda for the open informal session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities held on 14 May 2014

Engaging space tools for development on Earth — contribution of space technology and applications to the post-2015 development agenda

Introductory remarks	Simonetta Di Pippo (Office for Outer Space Affairs)
Presentations:	
Earth observations and telecommunications for peace and security	Rolf Sjoberg (Division for Geospatial, Information and Telecommunications Technologies, Department of Field Support, United Nations)
Humanitarian telemedicine: Potential telemedicine applications to assist developing countries in primary and secondary care	Peter Hulsroj (European Space Policy Institute) Alexandra Bonnefoy (European Space Policy Institute) David Gionet-Landry (European Space Policy Institute)
International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems and its Programme on the Applications of Global Navigation Satellite Systems	Sharafat Gadimova (executive secretariat of the International Committee on Global Navigation Satellite Systems, Office for Outer Space Affairs)
Overview of activities of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs	Simonetta Di Pippo (Office for Outer Space Affairs)
Seeing a better world — global development trends in remote sensing	Taner Kodanaz (DigitalGlobe) Kumar Navulur (DigitalGlobe)
UNGIWG briefing on geospatial activities among members	Andre Dehondt (Department of Safety and Security of the United Nations in his capacity as co-chair of UNGIWG)
Discussion and round-up	Simonetta Di Pippo and Niklas Hedman (Office for Outer Space Affairs)